



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Specialty Crop Block Grant Awards 2021

In 2021, the Washington State Department of Agriculture received approximately \$6.1 million in H.R. 133 Stimulus Funding to help fund 7 projects:

Grant Recipient: **Washington Hop Commission**

Project Title: **PPE Provision to Washington Hop Growers for 2021 Harvest**

Award: **\$50,000.00**

Abstract: The Washington Hop Commission will purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) related to COVID-19 relief efforts and distribute them to Washington hop industry members. The goal in distributing PPE and other safety supplies is to directly keep farm workers and/or harvesting facility workers safe and indirectly keeping the public community safe by stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Grant Recipient: **Washington State University**

Project Title: **Supporting Washington specialty crop producers, packers, and employees through coordinated distribution of COVID-19 relief supplies**

Award: **\$890,749.00**

Abstract: Washington State University will purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or hand washing stations or other safety supplies related to COVID-19 relief efforts and distribute them to the specialty crop (SC) industry members. The goal in distributing PPE and other safety supplies is to directly keep farm workers and/or processing facility workers safe and indirectly keeping the public community safe by stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Grant Recipient: **Washington Potato Commission**

Project Title: **Provide a program that reimburses potato growers for the cost of COVID safety supplies**

Award: **\$50,000.00**

Abstract: The Washington State Potato Commission will reimburse the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or hand washing stations or other safety supplies related to COVID-19 relief efforts by the potato growers in Washington. The goal of providing PPE and other safety supplies is to directly keep farm workers and/or processing facility workers safe and indirectly keeping the public community safe by stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Grant Recipient: **Washington State Dept. of Agriculture**

Project Title: **Responding to Change: Resource to Support Organic Farms through the Pandemic and Beyond**

Award: **\$110,127.00**

Abstract: In an unprecedented pandemic year, small diversified organic specialty crop businesses faced marketing challenges as their traditional channels evaporated or were markedly constrained. Businesses scrambled to find new ways to market their perishable produce quickly and safely. Many turned to farm subscription sales, commonly known as community supported agriculture (CSA), and food hubs to make up for closed restaurants and farmers markets. These markets afford businesses the opportunity to sell their products through lower-risk channels, but these non-traditional approaches present challenges in developing a recordkeeping system that meets requirements for organic certification and food safety. To support these businesses, WSDA Organic Program, in collaboration with WSDA Produce Safety and Regional Markets, will develop resources to assist organic growers and handlers in navigating regulations more efficiently.

During this two-year project, WSDA will develop and share a comprehensive guide for CSA farms and food hubs interested in producing and distributing organic products, including:

- Organic certification and Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requirements and exemptions for CSA farms, produce delivery services, and food hubs
- Recordkeeping strategies specific to each business type
- Guidance on maintaining organic integrity and safety from field to distribution
- Income reporting requirements and fees
- Technical assistance on organic production and handling, resources and support available to businesses, and educational tools for CSA farms and food hubs

As the pandemic and its aftermath continues to alter life and business, these markets are predicted to continue

their growth. The project's resources will help businesses grow with greater ease, safety, and efficiency.

Grant Recipient: **Washington Potato Commission**

Project Title: **Promoting Education of Washington Specialty Crops with the Washington Grown Video Project and in-store Promotions**

Award: **\$3,800,00.00**

Abstract: The Washington Grown Video Project will grow our audience to create more connections between consumers and growers, increase consumer knowledge of agricultural practices and local specialty crops, and introduce consumers to farmers and food businesses in Washington by producing new episodes of our Emmy-winning TV Show and expanding specialty crop awareness.

The Washington State Potato Commission serves as the day-to-day point of contact with multiple partnering agriculture groups overseeing the project. The Washington Grown Video Project funds will cover the expense of adding episodes that give the viewers a firsthand look at COVID-19 impacts on the industry, the changes made to ensure consumer safety, and how growers came to the aid of so many in need. In addition, episodes will showcase restaurants that use Washington specialty crop products in their kitchens and encourage consumers to return to these restaurants. Funding will also grow the retail and print extension, including creating point-of-sale materials to use in grocery stores, such as WA Grown branded bins and signage, recipes using specialty crops, and QR code signage directing consumers to www.wagrown.com, a monthly newsletter, and a printed magazine. The WA Grown website highlights the growers, crops, restaurants, and points of interest from each episode's segments so consumers can reach out directly to everyone featured. WA

Grown has a social media presence on all major platforms. With additional funding, we can increase the reach with new material to show episodes and segments and create fun and informative infographics that engage viewers to like and share posts.

Grant Recipient: **Washington State Dept. of Agriculture**

Project Title: **Implementation of a program to eradicate the Japanese Beetle and to ensure no more destruction of our specialty crops**

Award: **\$200,000.00**

Abstract: The Washington State Department of Agriculture will begin a Japanese beetle eradication program in the Grandview area of Yakima County, Washington. The agency trapped 2 beetles in Grandview in 2020; to date in 2021, there have been more than 20,000 beetles trapped in the area. The current scope of the infestation is 49 square miles, and in close proximity to high dollar at risk crops including tree fruit, wine and juice grapes, hops and greenhouse nursery crops. The eradication work included in this proposal would cover development of a quarantine area, preparation of education and outreach materials (both in English and Spanish), work with residential and agricultural property owners in the area to obtain their consent and understanding of the treatment, development of a plan for treatment of green waste in the quarantine area.

Grant Recipient: **Washington State Tree Fruit Association**

Project Title: **Slowing the spread of little cherry disease in Washington Cherries through increased testing**

Award: **\$530,589.00**

Abstract: Washington State Tree Fruit Association will work with industry to conduct more testing. More testing for Little cherry disease would be done by growers if costs were significantly lower and more capacity were available. Growers are currently testing only symptomatic trees that are discovered in the very narrow window before harvest. More testing needs to be done on asymptomatic trees near known infected trees if these diseases are to be controlled and eventually eradicated. Washington State University's (WSU) Plant Pest Diagnostic Clinic (Clinic) is able to offer tests to growers on a cost-only basis when capacity in excess of research program needs is available, which is not currently the case. To help expand the Clinic's capacity, this project would pay for additional testing equipment and supplies. This would guarantee an additional 4,000 polymerase chain reaction tests (PCR) per year to identify the presence of X-disease phytoplasma and/or Little cherry virus in samples. The Clinic will agree to charge producers \$50 for each of these tests, which is half of the private lab average.